

9-2-2014

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Roger Williams University School of Law

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Recommended Citation

Roger Williams University School of Law, "Newsroom: Judge Judith Savage Joins RWU Law" (2014). *Life of the Law School (1993-)*. 407.
https://docs.rwu.edu/law_archives_life/407

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Newsroom

Judge Judith Savage Joins RWU Law

Former Rhode Island Superior Court Judge Judith Savage will teach advanced criminal procedure, host major conference on mass incarceration.



BRISTOL, R.I., September 2, 2014 – Judge Judith

Colenback Savage has joined Roger Williams University School of Law as Distinguished Jurist in Residence. She will be teaching several courses throughout the 2014-2015 academic year and hosting a symposium on mass incarceration in the spring.

“Judge Savage has so much to offer our students,” said Dean Michael J. Yelnosky. “She has worked as a lawyer in private practice and in the highest levels of state government, and she had a remarkable career as a trial court judge in Rhode Island. If that wasn’t enough, she is also passionate about working with students both in and outside the classroom. I can’t wait to see her regularly at the law school.”

Judge Savage, who retired from the Rhode Island Superior Court in August 2013, after serving two decades on the bench, said she is “thrilled” to be taking up residence at the law school.

“RWU Law has a critically important mission in Rhode Island,” she said, “which is to educate its future lawyers amidst today’s changing legal landscape, and to act as a force to enhance the state’s administration of justice. I am honored to collaborate with the students, faculty and administration to advance this mission.”

During her residency at RWU Law, Judge Savage will be teaching “Criminal Procedure: Adjudication,” as well as advising students on their careers and assisting them with legal research and writing. “I served as a judicial mentor to RWU Law students for two decades on the Rhode Island Superior Court, and I am most excited about now continuing that mentoring in residence at the law school,” she said.

In the spring, she will teach a seminar built around the groundbreaking book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, by Michelle Alexander (The New Press, 2012), which “calls on us to reexamine an inordinately expensive criminal justice system that has incarcerated a greater percentage of its citizens – especially Blacks and Latinos – than most countries in the world,” Judge Savage said.

She is already working with a broad group of students to plan and convene a spring symposium focusing on the phenomenon of mass incarceration. The symposium will take place at the law school on Thursday and Friday, March 26 and 27, 2015. Media will be invited and encouraged to attend and learn more about this vital issue from some of the nation’s top experts.

“It’s exciting to see Judge Savage bringing more attention to one of the most important public policy issues of our time,” Dean Yelnosky said, “a problem that society will be looking to the next generation of lawyers to solve.”

Rhode Island Governor Bruce G. Sundlun appointed Judge Savage to the Superior Court bench in 1993. In 2010, she was one of five finalists for a seat on the state Supreme Court. During the selection process, fellow Superior Court Judge Susan E. McGuirl lauded her as “the smartest judge on the court. We go to her for advice. She’s a team player. She doesn’t have an ego. She’s a problem-solver.”

Savage earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Wellesley College in 1979 and her Juris Doctor from Case Western Reserve University School of Law in 1982. She worked as Executive Counsel for Governor Sundlun from 1991 until her appointment to the bench. She originally moved to Rhode Island, the home state of her husband, lawyer Jonathan Savage, to work at the law firm of Edwards & Angell. The couple has three children.